(d) An APO has since been issued to one of the successful bidders. The bidder has accepted the offer by submitting Purchase Bank Guarantee (PBG) with some conditions, which are under evaluation. Equipment is expected to be progressively available in about six months time from the date of acceptance of Purchase Order.

**Unique software package for e-governance**

1229. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to develop a unique software package for its much acclaimed e-governance;

(b) if so, the progress achieved towards that end;

(c) whether Government are considering to incorporate spreading free software developers in development of software packages;

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) As approved under the National e-Govemance Plan, the focus of e-governance projects is on delivery of services to citizens. Since different Departments provide different services to citizens, businesses and even Government, different applications have been developed by the concerned departments as per their requirements. Departments such as Income Tax, Custom and Excise and MCA have developed applications for their specific requirements, to name a few of the applications developed. The Government has also created a framework for the development of Standards so as to ensure better interoperability between applications of various Government Departments.

(c) to (e) Government maintains a stance of technology neutrality, platform neutrality and vendor neutrality. It has, therefore not prescribed preferential treatment of one over the other.

**Electronic Telephone Exchanges**

1230. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of electronic telephone exchanges set up in the country particularly in the State of Assam, during the last three years, State-wise/District-wise/year-wise;

(b) the details of such telephone exchanges proposed to be set up in Assam during this period, location-wise; and

(c) the details of financial grants allocated by Government for this purpose, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, details of